



Kent Community Health  
NHS Foundation Trust



Spring/Summer 2020

## Volunteers Week 2020

What makes people want to volunteer? The reasons are different for each person, but it may be because they want to help their local community or support the NHS. It could be that they have some extra time on their hands or even that they feel a little lonely and want to connect with people.

Whatever the reason, we are so lucky to have our army of volunteers at Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) and I want to say a big thank you to you all for the help you give all-year round, and especially so during the COVID-19 outbreak.

It's Volunteers' Week, from Monday, 1 June to Sunday, 7 June and so it's fitting that we celebrate the 500 volunteers we have at KCHFT. The roles our volunteers hold are diverse and that is one of the things that makes you such a valuable resource for our patients, clients, service users and staff.

It has, without doubt, been a strange few months. In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, we received more than 150 new enquiries to volunteer with us, and we successfully deployed more than 25 new volunteers to help in our community hospitals and delivering letters to patients at this time.

We also recruited 14 new members to our trust from our volunteers.

Many of our existing volunteers continue to support teams, such as Joanne Wigginton who supports the Health Visiting Team in Gravesend.

Jess Webster was recruited during COVID-19 and is now volunteering in the kitchen at Edenbridge and District War Memorial Hospital, preparing meals for patients and colleagues, washing up and doing tea rounds.

Another volunteer, Mark Vooght, is at Faversham Cottage Hospital during his time on furlough. He has been delivering urgent letters to patients, making up patient packs and running general errands at the hospital.

During this time, we know that many of you are in isolation and are unable to give your time. This

must be frustrating for you all. Please remember to look after your health and wellbeing - you can find lots of useful information and advice for you and your loved ones to look after your mental health and wellbeing while you stay at home [here](#).

In the coming days and weeks, we are working to reset our services, using a structured approach to make sure we maintain safe patient care across every area of our work. We have many new roles in development as well as having you, our valued volunteers, back in your roles.

With your help, we can reset and reimagine the work we do and the care we deliver to our patients. Through your efforts and the efforts of our colleagues, you truly make our lives a little brighter.

Thank you for all that you do.

Paul Bentley  
Chief Executive



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## Volunteer stories

It's national volunteer week and at KCHFT we are celebrating the army of volunteers we have across our services.

### Joanne Wigginton

"I haven't got a halo or anything, I just wanted to give something back to the NHS because they looked after me so well."

Joanne Wigginton, 59, from Gravesend, has been volunteering for KCHFT's Health Visiting Service in Gravesend for four years and in that time she has become an integral part of the team.

"In 2011 I was diagnosed with breast cancer and received fabulous care and treatment from Darenth Valley hospital and other NHS services. When I was made redundant from my admin role at Kent County Council I was in the fortunate position of not needing to work so I decided I would give back to the NHS by volunteering."

“I am comfortable doing admin and general office work so that is what I do for the health visiting service. They are a lovely team and it gives me a little fix of working. I’m sure I get more out of it than they get out of me.”

“During the COVID-19 pandemic I initially felt a bit helpless but I have continued to go into the office, just changing my day from Monday to Tuesday to fit in with the rest of the team, and I feel blessed to be able to help. I’ve been doing my usual work while observing social distancing and making sure all equipment is thoroughly wiped down between uses. There are signs all around the office to remind us.”

Alfie Cook, Information and Data Clerk, Gravesend Health Visiting Service said “Jo isn’t just a volunteer to us, she’s a member of the team; an integral part of what we do. She is absolutely fantastic and her organisational skills are impeccable, I wish I was as organised as she is!

"For colleagues interested in having a volunteer in their service I would say volunteers are doing it because they want to, not to pay the bills. They want to be helpful and useful and if you're as lucky as us and get a Jo in your team, they won't replace a paid colleague but they will certainly enhance your team.

“Jo is a breath of fresh air when she comes in and is always smiling. She might not think she has a halo but she does in our eyes.”



## **Carole Martin**

Infant feeding specialists in Kent and Medway are supported by breastfeeding support volunteers, including Carole Martin, a retired NHS dietitian with more than 30 years' experience specialising in diabetes, including gestational diabetes.

Carole, from Broadstairs, joined KCHFT as a breastfeeding support volunteer 18 months ago.

Before lockdown restrictions came into force, Carole helped a health visitor and nursery nurse at a drop-in for breastfeeding mums at Priory Children's Centre in Ramsgate, two or three times a month.

Carole said: “It is a real joy being there for new mums who want to start or continue to feed their babies. I have always been passionate about breastfeeding and I understand for many of us, it

doesn't come naturally.

"We need a lot of support and encouragement to fulfil our wish to give our newborns the best start in life. Mums can sometimes think they are doing something wrong, which leaves them feeling vulnerable and affects their confidence."

Carole said her role was 'to listen to their concerns and offer advice and tips on issues such as positioning and attachment'. She also gives lots of reassurance. "Sometimes their anxiety stops the milk flow and often just talking or suggesting a small change helps mum to persevere until she gets the hang of it."

"I am looking forward to the drop-ins starting again when it is safe and I would also like to volunteer in post-natal wards in the future."



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## [Get involved](#)

Could you help us to improve what we do and the way we do it? Are you a patient, service user or carer who has something to say about our services?

If so, we would like to hear from you. Your views and experiences are so important to making sure we get things right and we want to put you at the heart of everything we do. If you would like to be involved please email [kentchft.engagement@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.engagement@nhs.net) or phone 01233 667810.

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## [Royal Voluntary Service's virtual village hall](#)

The virtual village hall brings you a programme of themed online activities designed to beat the boredom of isolation. Activities are led by expert tutors, Royal Voluntary Service activity coordinators and volunteers, and are designed to do at home with very little space or equipment needed.

The programme includes baking and preserve making, gentle exercise and dance, and arts and crafts, with more to come. There are lots of activities to choose from so you can continue to enjoy the things you like doing and learn something new too.

To find out more or take part, visit their website [here](#).

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## [Health walk volunteers](#)

At present, health walks in Kent are suspended and we will let you know when they resume. For more details, please email [kcht.healthwalks@nhs.net](mailto:kcht.healthwalks@nhs.net).

Health walker, Diana Backwell from Deal, has shared her poem.

Greetings Health Walk Leaders, I hope this finds you well,  
Despite self-isolation, our programmes shot to hell.  
We can wander lonely as a cloud, but only close to home,  
And take the dog out walking, but do not let him roam.  
And should we try some shopping - extraordinary scenes!  
It's a good job we've got queuing imprinted in our genes.

But outdoors nature's on the move, lambs leaping, flowers bloom,  
Bees droning, gardens growing, birdsong dispels the gloom.  
So get out in the sunshine, shout 'hello' to your friends,  
We'll walk together once again when Covid 19 ends.



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## [Looking after your health and wellbeing](#)

You can find lots of useful information and advice for you and your loved ones to look after your mental health and wellbeing while you stay at home.

- ✓ keeping active
- ✓ community support
- ✓ protecting your mental health

Read more [here](#).

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## [Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group](#)

The NHS across Kent and Medway has risen to the challenge of responding to the initial impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Clinicians and thousands of support staff have worked tirelessly to care for the most seriously ill while maintaining other essential urgent services.

Together with our partners we are now planning to restart health services which we have had to pause.

We have launched an [online survey](#) for patients and families so we can find out what you think of the changes we had to put in place, such as moving appointments to phone, video or online consultations. This will inform what we do next and how we reassure the public about the safety of NHS services while Coronavirus (COVID-19) is still around.

The [survey](#) will close on **Monday, 15 June**. Please share it with family and friends so we can gather as many views as possible.

Wilf Williams, Accountable Officer for NHS [Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group](#) (KMCCG), and Cathy Finnis, lay-member for patient and public involvement at KMCCG, will be hosting a public online meeting on **Wednesday 3 June from 2 to 2.30pm**. The meeting will explain the role of KMCCG and our plans for public engagement going forward. There will also be an opportunity to ask Wilf and Cathy questions.

To join the meeting, please click [here](#) at the time of the meeting, at **2pm on Wednesday, 3 June**. All are welcome.

If you have any questions about the online event or about the survey please email [kmccg.engagekm@nhs.net](mailto:kmccg.engagekm@nhs.net), phone or text 07767 870207.

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## [Calling all knitters](#)

Can you knit a rainbow to honour our NHS heroes?

Or a pair of knitted hearts to give to patients in our community hospitals and their families?

If you can help, please email [kentchft.engagement@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.engagement@nhs.net) or phone 07584 182695 for the knitting pattern.



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## **[Healthwatch Kent volunteer newsletter](#)**

Our friends at [Healthwatch Kent](#) produce a weekly newsletter for NHS volunteers packed full of interesting stories and useful information for you.

Please click [here](#) to read the latest version and, if you have a story to share, please email us at [kentchft.engagement@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.engagement@nhs.net).

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## **[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) accessible information resources](#)**

Health Education England (HEE) has collated specific Coronavirus (COVID-19) information resources for older people, children and young people and in accessible formats, including Easy Read, Makaton and British Sign Language (BSL). These resources can be used by our colleagues who directly work with patients, carers and families who require information in accessible formats. You can find out more and view these resources [here](#).

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## **[COVID-19 fraud and scams](#)**

Sadly, during the pandemic, it's important that you remain vigilant and guard against criminals using the publicity around Coronavirus (COVID-19) as a chance to target you with fraudulent emails, phone calls, texts messages or social media posts.

That is why Kent Police is encouraging you to [Take Five](#) and check out the national website offering straight-forward, impartial advice that helps prevent email, phone-based and online fraud, particularly where criminals impersonate trusted organisations.

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[Anything to contribute?](#)

If you have a story to tell, we would love to hear from you. Please email [kentchft.engagement@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.engagement@nhs.net) or phone 01233 667810.

Don't forget to look at the [volunteering page](#) on our website for all the latest news, role vacancies and volunteers' stories.



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